

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1 - 4. (Cancelled).

5. (Previously Presented) A tap dancing shoe comprising:

a sole including a front portion, a rear portion, a top surface, and a bottom surface;

an upper secured to said sole defining a shoe cavity that completely encloses said front portion of said sole;

a front tap plate secured to said bottom surface of said front portion of said sole;

a heel attached to said bottom surface of said sole, said heel having a bottom;

a rear tap plate secured to said bottom of said heel; and

a shock absorbing cushion disposed within said shoe cavity and extending from a front end and a ball portion located above said front portion of said top surface of said sole through an intermediate portion to a rear portion located above said rear portion of said top surface of said sole, said front end and ball portion of said shock absorbing cushion being thicker than said intermediate portion and said rear portion of said shock absorbing cushion, said shock absorbing cushion being permanently secured to said top surface of said sole.

6. (Previously Presented) The tap dancing shoe defined in Claim 5 wherein said sole is formed from a rigid material.

7. (Canceled).

8. (Previously Presented) The tap dancing shoe defined in Claim 5 wherein said shock absorbing cushion is permanently fastened to said top surface of said sole.

9. (Previously Presented) The tap dancing shoe defined in Claim 5 wherein said shock absorbing cushion includes a layer of a cushioning material that is thicker at said front portion of said sole than at said rear portion of said sole.

10. (Previously Presented) The tap dancing shoe defined in Claim 5 wherein said shock absorbing cushion includes multiple layers of a cushioning material.

11. (Previously Presented) The tap dancing shoe defined in Claim 10 wherein said multiple layers of said cushioning material are bonded together.

12. (Previously Presented) The tap dancing shoe defined in Claim 5 wherein said shock absorbing cushion includes a bottom layer that is formed from a foamed polymeric material and a top layer that is formed from a textured fabric material.